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ABSTRACT

In summarizing the United Nations' International Round Table on the Theme "How the Handicapped Are Presented to the General Public," held in 1977, the paper--presented as the final report of the Round Table--discusses the question of how to present the image of handicapped people to the public in such a way as to foster their maximum integration into society. (DLS)

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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON THE THEME
"HOW THE HANDICAPPED ARE PRESENTED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC"

Held at Unesco House, Paris, on 1 June 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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FINAL REPORT

by

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UNESCO wishes to thank {

Madame Valéry GISCARD d'ESTAING, who honoured with her presence the morning meeting of 1 June 1977 and opened the exhibition of posters and photographs;

Monsieur René LENOIR, Secretary of State for Health and Social Welfare who introduced the theme of the discussion;

and the National Commissions of those of its Member States that were associated with this activity and gave it their support.

"How the Handicapped are presented to the General Public"

I. Round Table: Wednesday, 1 June 1977

- 9 a.m. Opening of the Round Table by Mr. John E. Fobes, Deputy Director-General of Unesco, in the presence of Madame Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.
- Speech by M. René Lenoir, Secretary of State for Health and Social Welfare (France).
- Introductory address by M. Bernard Blin, Chairman of the Information Committee of the French National Commission for Unesco.
- 9.45 a.m. Speeches by the representatives of the National Commissions for Unesco of Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America (each speech lasting 15 minutes)*.
- 12.45 p.m. Opening by Madame Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of the international poster and photograph exhibition on the theme of the meeting, arranged with the collaboration of the Fondation de France and the Jeune Chambre internationale. The exhibition was open to the public from 2 to 17 June 1977.
- 3 p.m. Audio-visual presentation of the theme "How the Handicapped are presented to the General Public", specially prepared for this meeting and followed by a general discussion.
- 5.45 p.m. Closure of the session by the Chairman, M. Bernard Blin.

II. Film Fortnight on "Handicaps and Maladjustments", 2-17 June 1977

Films from various countries, arranged according to subject, were shown in the Unesco cinema.

* The texts of the speeches delivered at this Round Table, including those of the representatives of the National Commissions of Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America, are available in the original languages (with a résumé in French or English) and may be obtained free of charge on written application to Unesco, Division for the Promotion and Circulation of Information, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 PARIS.

Representatives of the National Commissions for Unesco

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CANADA	Mr. David A. White Director of Information Services, Canadian Council for Rehabilitating the Handicapped
DENMARK	Mrs. Inge Nilsson Consultant, Inspectorate of Special Education Ministry of Special Education
FRANCE	Mr. Jean Savy, Administrator Comité national français de liaison pour la réadaptation des handicapés (French National Liaison Committee for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped)
GERMANY (FED. REP. of)	Mr. W.F. Meyer Head of Section Federal Board of Health (Bundeszentrale für Gesundheitliche Aufklärung)
HUNGARY	Miss Mária Hari Director of the Institute of Conductive Education
POLAND	Dr. Alexander Hulek Professor at the Institute of Pedagogy Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology University of Warsaw
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SWITZERLAND	Miss Sylvianne Blanc French Switzerland Secretariat Pro Infirmis
UNITED KINGDOM	1. Mr. Charles Pascoe TV Producer British Broadcasting Corporation 2. Mr. George Wilson Acting Director of the British Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
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How the handicapped are presented to the general public

A report on the International Round Table held at Unesco House, Paris, 1 June 1977, by Philippe Saint-Martin, Technical Adviser, Groupement des intellectuels handicapés physiques (GIHP)

The images used in the presentation

Is it not true that, in every society, there must be a minimum of conformity in the behaviour and attitudes of its members? If this condition be not met, the very foundations of social equilibrium will be in danger of collapsing. From this we may deduce that there will be certain individuals in any group who do not correspond to the norms "in force". As a society develops, the threshold of performance required of its members likewise alters. Consequently, there is a change in the origin and number of "deviates", and hence in other people's attitude towards them. Another question is whether the frontier between the normal and the abnormal depends on objective, absolute criteria, or whether its position may change, according to the historical, social and cultural context. Under Justinian, people born deaf were deprived of their civic rights, whereas those who became deaf retained them. Similarly, at what point does someone short count as a dwarf or someone tall as a giant or a basket-ball star? Does not the social function cancel out the handicap? Lastly, the level at which a deficiency is recognized varies from one country to another, as is shown for example by I.Q. tests.

It is probable that, for thousands of years, there have been collective conceptions of infirmity and the infirm in communities developing under the influence of different but interdependent factors - not only economic, demographic, scientific and technical factors, but also political, philosophical, ethical and religious ones. This material and cultural - in the broadest sense - transformation of human societies has led to changes in their attitudes towards such fundamental questions as life and death. And it is probably at this level that we should situate both individual and collective attitudes towards "variants".

As the Austrian and Polish representatives pointed out, the Spartans, who flung down from the heights of Mount Taygetus any newborn infants who were deformed, were not the only ones to resort to the "final answer". But, leaving aside this drastic solution, the attitude of the human community towards its handicapped members has gone through various stages. A Unesco publication which appeared in 1974 lists five such stages, which may be set out schematically and defined briefly; although they follow one another chronologically in time and space, they often overlap on the plane of mental attitudes.

(a) The philanthropic stage:

Here the dominant idea is infirmity: disability is seen as an objective constant, characteristic of the subject.

(b) The "public welfare" stage:

The institutionalization of assistance to the needy disabled.

(c) The stage of fundamental rights:

This is when the notion of universal rights comes in: no one, whatever his background, must be deprived of these rights, including the right to education.

(d) The stage of the right to equal opportunity:

At a time when economic and cultural development require that all children go to school, it becomes evident that many of them are unable to keep up with the general rate of progress. This "inferior efficiency" is often due to the socio-economic or socio-cultural situation of the families concerned. So widespread is the phenomenon that not only scientists and teachers but also politicians are obliged to give thought to the relationship between the individual and his environment. It is at this point that the concept of "a handicap" comes into the picture.

(e) The stage of the right to integration:

The preceding stage opened the way for an indefinite extension of the notion of a handicap. Now it is the notion of norms and normality that is called in question. Competition between individuals, and inequality of conditions as the result of inequality of talent, having led to the sort of economic development with which we are all familiar, society is beginning to worry about the absence of communication between men and about the increasing number of minorities, which leads every citizen to ponder the aims of his own life and the meaning of life in general.

The "handicapped", as they are called, form one of those minorities which raise the problem of integration in an acute form - i.e. that of their living among, living with, other people, and taking on family, social and professional responsibilities according to their own abilities and tastes, just like fully-fledged citizens. But integration presupposes information. For no social group, especially a minority, can share in the life of the community with equal rights and duties if the rest of the community is unaware of or disregards its aspirations and difficulties. People accept only what they know. This briefly is the context in which the Round Table was held on 1 June 1977 on "How the handicapped are presented to the general public". The objectives of the Round Table had been worked out gradually beforehand in the course of several preliminary meetings organized by Unesco and attended by representatives of the French associations and ministries concerned; at the same time, certain countries made similar preparations. In April 1976, a "Day of the Visually Handicapped" was held to coincide with the launching of the "Unesco Braille Review". This encouraging innovation called for a repetition of the experience, bearing in mind that whereas most of the public attending would be French, Unesco, as an international organization, had to produce a programme reflecting its world-wide mission. So, at the plenary meeting of 29 October 1976, it was decided that 1 June should be a day devoted to making Unesco known to the handicapped. It was also emphasized how useful it would be to make able-bodied people understand what it is really like to be handicapped (for example, by holding an exhibition of sculpture in the dark, or letting people ride round in wheel-chairs); others suggested "the right to be different" as a theme. The Round Table was to be supplemented by an exhibition showing the most interesting methods and achievements in various countries, whilst Unesco itself was to organize information programmes on its own activities for any "handicapped" groups who might be interested.

The theme was more closely defined at the second plenary meeting (13 January 1977) as "Aims and techniques of making the general public aware of the problems of handicapped people". The way different countries dealt with this question of information was to be demonstrated with the help of short television or film sequences, radio programmes, posters and slogans. The debate was to be centred, not on integration, its conditions and possibilities, its necessity and advantages, but on the way in which the subject was presented to the public. In preparation for the June meeting itself, a questionnaire was sent to the eleven participating countries, together with a letter to Unesco's 141 Member States, asking them to send in pictorial material such as posters, photographs or films. The Round Table was to consist of two parts: in the morning, there would be very brief statements describing the information

campaigns conducted in the participating countries, the means employed and the results secured, mentioning failures as well as successes, and if possible indicating plans for future campaigns; the afternoon was to be devoted to general discussion.

An intriguing title needed to be found which would reflect the ultimate objective - the total integration of the "handicapped" into society. A poster exhibition was planned, and it was suggested that some films should be shown. At the last plenary meeting (30 March 1977), after a discussion on concepts such as "a handicap" and "the handicapped", and taking into account the particular need to inform the French public about the abilities and difficulties of the different kinds of handicapped people, the title agreed upon was "How the handicapped are presented to the general public by the media", afterwards shortened to "How the handicapped are presented to the general public". At the same time an exhibition of posters on the "handicapped" was organized by the Jeune Chambre Economique Internationale, to be on show from 1 to 17 June. Jacques-Daniel Vernon was entrusted with the audio-visual presentation of the theme which was to start the afternoon meeting, and with the film fortnight on "Handicaps and Maladjustments" which was to last from 2 to 17 June 1977.

The shift in theme resulted in a change in the number and kind of people expected to attend. The participants originally contemplated were to have been handicapped persons and others closely connected with them, but it now seemed desirable to try to include the opinions of the general public. Unesco's main conference hall was booked for the meeting, half of the thousand seats available being reserved for the public and the other half for the media, the handicapped themselves, and people specially concerned with the subject.

Why the title "How the handicapped are presented to the general public"? Simply because there comes a time when one has to think about "what one says and the way one says it". The French version of the title uses the word "image". What did that mean? René Lenoir, Secretary of State for Health and Social Welfare, defined it in his speech as "what ultimately remains in the mind of a film sequence, pamphlet, newspaper article, radio broadcast, poster, slogan or phrase, after it has been seen or heard".

Everyone is steeped in such images every day. While they may either speed up or hinder integration, and can thus be produced with integration as the objective, there can of course be images of the handicapped which have nothing to do with integration. Disablement may be used as a symbol or a pretext. Whether in the New Testament or in Hergé's famous strip cartoons ("Tintin et Milou"), cripples may reflect contemporary ideas, and consciously or otherwise encourage certain kinds of behaviour.

And so, as the ideas of the organizers gradually developed, the day of 1 June, originally designed as an information session, became also a day for reflection. From the study of means (channels of information, methods of financing, decision-making bodies) they proceeded to a discussion of results (themes selected, targets chosen).

Confronted with such a new and complex subject, it would be presumptuous to attempt to draw final conclusions. The Rapporteur of the meeting can only hope to have reflected everyone's thinking and work faithfully, and to have brought out a few images to avoid and some others to foster, so that the "handicapped", who know they are men, may accept their handicap, whilst the rest, who see them as "handicapped", may accept them as men.

Images are not neutral

In order to concentrate the discussion on images of the "handicapped", a documentary exhibition, composed largely of posters from every continent, was arranged. It was made clear that the intention was not to pass judgement on the content of the images but to show a number of the stereotypes used in national information campaigns; the subsequent discussion would be used in the final preparation of the sound-track. It was decided to adopt the following pattern for the exhibition:

A. Aims of information and creation of awareness:

1. Prevention
2. Appeals for funds
3. Appeals for help
4. Information on acronyms and symbols
5. Information on associations and congresses
6. Appeals for participation
7. Information on physical environment problems
8. Information on psychological environment problems
9. Rights of the handicapped

B. Reactions aimed at:

1. Fear
2. Embarrassment, uneasiness
3. "Noble sentiments"
4. Appeals to reason
5. Identification

C. Means employed:

1. The able-bodied as speaker
2. The handicapped person as speaker
3. From speech to image

It is always a delight to cinema-fans when a debate on "form" and "content" is launched on the basis of 20 minutes' screening. Now, here, the object was to lay stress on the effects of drawings and slogans upon their audience. For is it not the intention of the originators of such material to persuade the spectators, explicitly or implicitly, to behave in a certain way? Do not posters stressing the dangers of vitamin deficiency or giving advice on vaccinations create some confusion between being "handicapped" and being ill? May not appeals for financial support make the "handicapped" seem like a burden on society, on the associations involved, and on their fellow-citizens? On the other hand, a poster showing a mother with a

pram faced by a staircase. Wheelchair faced by a telephone booth, brings out the fact that the "handicapped" are the same as those of other social categories. The problem may even be brought to light in this way: for example, the fact that a person in eight is unable to climb stairs. Is it better to provoke people, or to appeal to common sense (for example, one poster showed a "handicapped" woman enclosed in a bell-jar, with the caption, "Is she contagious?")

Is there not a contradiction between all these different appeals for aid and the assertion that the "handicapped" are just like other people, and possess the same rights? Is it necessary to play on fear or embarrassment (for example, the poster depicting a wheelchair, with the caption, "Will this be your next mode of transport? Thirty thousand people have one already?")

What are the objects of the exercise? To create a better understanding of people who are different, or to avoid creating more cases of a handicap? May not people be encouraged to turn their backs on things which happen only to other people? Is there not often a contradiction between image and caption (as in the poster showing a thin, blue face with dark glasses against a black background, with the caption, "Blindness is not a handicap"?). Will a handicap come to be regarded as a natural feature of life if the number of handicapped is minimized, or would it be better to admit that there are large numbers of them, including those whose handicap is invisible? (One poster bore the caption: "One child in eight will need psychiatric treatment".) Should the accent be on "difference" or on identification (in three seconds anyone can be shown how to recognize a cerebral palsy patient)? And who is to present the problems of the "handicapped"? If the able-bodied do it, will the problems they speak of be those that handicapped people really experience? If the latter present their problems themselves, will they not appear as agitators? (One slogan, "Rehabilitation is liberation", was illustrated by a fist brandishing a crutch.) And might this not be disturbing, the "handicapped" appearing to be used for political ends? Moreover, how are certain disabilities, such as deafness or a mental handicap, to be shown? Does not a picture of a handicapped person smiling and cheerful, or of a happy couple, contrast strongly with the reality perceived by the general public? A touch of humour might make it possible to create awareness without over-dramatization (a poster shows a handicapped man in a wheelchair unable to negotiate a pavement in order to follow a girl: will the public see this as illustrating an architectural or an emotional problem?) A drawing, without any caption, showing a haggard, sad-looking face naturally suggests such moral and social reactions as charity, pity, neighbourly love, altruism, etc. Perhaps that is why so much use is made of pictures of handicapped children. But, on the other hand, does this not lead people to think of the "handicapped" as children who never grow up?

These are questions which might have occurred to anyone watching the audio-visual production or visiting the poster exhibition. And, with an audience of about 200, all of them concerned with handicaps or actually "handicapped" themselves, it was not surprising that most of the questions, both written and oral, came from the latter. The questions were largely based on the accounts given during the morning by the representatives of the National Commissions for Unesco. It is important to remember that these 11 countries - Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America - all possess economic structures which are fairly comparable with one another, as well as a culture influenced by Christianity. But, owing to its geographical, historical and political characteristics, each country is a special case. So that at any given point the attitude of the audience was found to be a composite one, affected by individual and collective ideologies, by moral and religious sets of values, by professional codes and by differing personal experience of the "handicapped".

Since both questions and answers were thus very diverse, the debate is summarized below under five closely interrelated heads:

- A. What are the aims?
- B. Who is the audience?
- C. What themes should be chosen?
- D. Who should do the talking?
- E. Who is to be talked about?

Such a formal arrangement, while it cannot reflect the richness of the debate, does give an idea of the prevailing concerns of most of the participants.

A. What are the aims?

Once the problem is no longer how to provide every handicapped person with an indispensable minimum, but how to enable him to develop all his faculties to the full, new obstacles arise. Integration, i.e. "living with", comes up against two main types of barrier, the material and the psychological. For it is a platitude to say that a handicapped person bears stigmata which are due to ignorance, prejudice, preconceived ideas, taboos, or simply fear of gossip. While it is necessary to get rid of architectural barriers, for example in the home and in public places, what good will that do if other people refuse to live with the handicapped? So there was a consensus to the effect that the main object is to change the "climate", and that this in itself will help to do away with material barriers.

Hence, while the presentation of medical and technical information presents a problem, the most urgent problem of all is that of "understanding". The public should not judge by appearances, or automatically associate unattractive appearances with negative moral values. That is why the education of children, both in and out of school, is so important, so that they may learn to connect "ill-favoured faces with generous ideas".

B. Who is the audience?

Since the important point is to create a new "climate" or atmosphere, maximum impact can be obtained only if campaigns are aimed at the public as a whole. This does not mean that more detailed technical information should not be addressed to certain professional groups like social workers, architects, trade unions, and so on. Such small specialized groups may share the prejudices of public opinion in general, but when they lose them, they in their turn will meet with general incomprehension (as do specialized educators). Moreover, the integration of the handicapped into ordinary everyday life involves many encounters, whereas handicapped people prefer not to attract attention. It might be said that they have a right to anonymity among others sufficiently well informed to behave naturally towards them.

C. What themes should be chosen?

While to assert that the "handicapped" are people just like everyone else is an essential stage in their integration, there are certain pitfalls to be avoided. Some useful themes are indicated at the end of this report, but here mention must be made of an almost universal criticism which was levelled at campaigns in the form of "appeals for help", especially financial help. Switzerland, where information

campaigns are linked to appeals for funds, stressed the danger of regarding the "handicapped" as a group of dependants. Fund-raising in Switzerland is therefore carried out by means of some kind of trade (the sale of Tee-shirts and cards), not by appeals for charity as in France. Such appeals, as Sweden recalled, are often synonymous with inferiority and begging. Conversely, while the cultural setting of any information campaign has to be taken into account the current economic situation must not be overlooked. In periods of economic difficulty there is a danger that handicapped people will be regarded as privileged. So certain themes such as sports, and more particularly riding, which are invaluable in helping to give a dynamic image of the "handicapped", should nevertheless be handled with tact. Lastly, several speakers underlined the fact that at a time when the mass communication media, and advertising in particular, dwell on the image of the superman and the eternal woman, and when more and more people resort to aesthetic surgery, the "handicapped" may present a counter-image which is the opposite of beauty and intelligence.

D. Who should do the talking?

Integration being the objective, it was clear that this priority should operate at the level of information itself; the "handicapped" person should not give the impression of being alone when he addresses an audience, but rather should join in with all those who wish to speak, provided that they are convinced of what they say and therefore credible. Everyone agreed that the speakers should be first and foremost the people concerned, i.e. those suffering from any kind of handicap. Particularly striking was the experience of Sweden and the United Kingdom, where the mentally handicapped appear directly in television and radio broadcasts ("The Mentally Retarded Talk", in Sweden, and "James is Our Brother" in the United Kingdom). Such programmes show the public that not only can such people express their own needs, but they can also analyse a given situation; this probably accounts for the success of this type of programme. A point that was brought out here was the hierarchy of handicaps, and therefore of those affected by them. It may be that this hierarchy is perpetuated by the "handicapped" themselves and their associations. Might there not be, among each type of handicapped group, an unconscious desire to distinguish itself from other groups so as to come closer to existing norms? For example, while confusion is common in the public mind between mental illness and mental handicap, it should also be noted that the associations representing these two groups like to differentiate themselves from one another. The mentally handicapped person is not mentally ill, he is not dangerous; the mentally ill person is not feeble-minded but intelligent; and neither the one nor the other is mad! In the same way, physically disabled people do not like to be confused with those who are mentally handicapped.

If a handicap is a tragedy, it is first and foremost a tragedy for the person afflicted by it. Parental rights or professional qualifications should not entitle anyone to speak on behalf of handicapped adults, especially when it is a question of what they actually feel.

The Polish representative showed how great the difference was between a tuberculosis centre designed by experts and a centre conceived by the patients in terms of their experience and therefore conforming to their wishes.

Lastly, handicapped people should be aware of their responsibilities, for, willy nilly, they produce images in the minds of the people surrounding them which may help either to entrench existing stereotypes or to call them in question.

But when we talk of information we are talking in the first instance of those who circulate it. An interesting question which emerged at the afternoon meeting was, "How do journalists see the handicapped?" The answer is likely to determine the nature of the campaigns they engage in. An Austrian journalist and a representative of the BBC both underlined the importance they attached to contacts with associations

for the handicapped and handicapped individuals engaged in active life, whose perception of their own problems differed from that of other handicapped people; this was because they were, from the outset, steeped in the prejudices of those around them, which induced a degree of self-censorship. In view of this, it was suggested that schools of journalism should provide for lectures and talks by handicapped people.

Finally, while the general public is the recipient of information, it is not necessarily a passive listener to be pontificated at. The United States representative quoted the example of a television discussion on the integration of "handicapped" children in schools. Two opinion polls were held, one before and one after the broadcast. After a debate lasting an hour and a half, 70 per cent of those questioned were in favour of integration and of giving increased financial aid to schools. Thousands of viewers wrote in.

E. Who is to be talked about?

To begin with, should we talk about the "handicapped", or about people suffering from a handicap? This might seem to be a mere terminological quibble, but both expressions were used in the audio-visual production, and the term "handicapped" was the one which attracted attention. In fact, the vocabulary used depends on the awareness of the general public. In France, where the word "handicapé" still has many negative, not to say perjorative, connotations, it is challenged by the people to whom it is applied.

No one is a "handicapped person sui generis", but a person afflicted by a handicap. To say that "the handicapped do this", or "the handicapped think that", is to put the emphasis on what differentiates them. Does it not unconsciously open the door to the same intellectual mechanisms that lie at the root of racialism? It suggests that there is a special psychology in which a handicap plays a decisive role, quite independently of the personal history or social relationships of the individual concerned. In the present state of public opinion, to keep reminding people that there are millions of "handicapped" persons is likely, apart from the fatalistic impression it may create, to make them think that there are millions requiring perpetual help.

Another question: should there be special campaigns for each category of handicapped persons, or general ones common to them all? This leads to the further question: what problems or interests in common have a deaf person and a paraplegic, or a blind university professor and someone classified as seriously backward?

According to some speakers (United States, United Kingdom and Switzerland), general campaigns are better, in that all kinds of handicapped people have problems of housing, employment and social insurance; in short, they are rejects in a society run by people sound in body and mind.

The opposite view was taken by those who observed that there is little solidarity between handicapped people, and a danger of neglecting the abilities and potentialities of each individual in favour of disabilities common to all and often more imaginary than real. This danger is especially great in a context where the potential contribution of handicapped people is largely underestimated, and there is confusion about the different kinds of handicap in the public mind. In actual fact, the two different approaches are complementary rather than contradictory, and it is probable that once a certain number of vital needs such as accessibility and minimum income are covered, campaigns will tend to be specific. Moreover, since some handicaps are more vigorously rejected by society than others, it might be that information concentrated upon those groups would ultimately benefit all the others. For example, one might concentrate on the mentally ill, the "rejected of the rejected", the public's attitude towards whom can

actually contribute to their cure. The same applies to epileptics or sufferers from cerebral palsy. Despite the difficulty of translating this kind of handicap into images, and despite these groups' own difficulties in expressing themselves, these are the categories which might be the object of "demystification" campaigns which would indirectly benefit all the others.

"Assets to society"

It is often said that words and phrases carry less weight than personal involvement, but one sometimes wonders: for example, newspapers talk of "the impassioned voice of Mr. X sounding from his invalid's chair", or, in an article on ecology, of "their desire simply to meet young people of their own age and talk about serious matters instead of playing at cowboys and Indians like slightly feeble overgrown children", or, as a headline, "Handicapped driver disregards a stop: two dead". There have always been particular relationships between the handicapped and society. The disturbing fact of "deviance" is bound to produce anxiety and expectation of trouble, which often lead to rejection and segregation. Throughout history, throughout the development of ethnology, we see the formation or existence of categories of individuals in whose case one peculiarity overrides everything else. The process has been studied by Michel Foucault in his chapter on "Naissance de l'asile" (*Histoire de la Folie*, Plon, 1961). Illness and handicaps began to loom so large that they concealed all the subject's other qualities. Is this a unique process, or a parallel to the evolution of industrial society, which assigns to every individual the role of producer?

The situation of the mad or the old has not always been what it is now. The tendency to isolate them is less inescapable than was previously supposed, and it is now clear that the technical imperatives advanced are connected with preconceived ideas or habits. Moreover, the increasing speed at which our societies develop could not fail to call in question the immutability of accepted norms and models, and consequently also the pessimistic views formerly held about the possibility of integrating handicapped people into the community as a whole. The evolution of medical techniques and the various branches of pathology has also modified the social make-up of the "World of the handicapped". In earlier days, most of the "handicapped" came from among the poor, and were victims of malnutrition, tuberculosis, unhealthy working conditions, rickets, and so on. Nowadays they come from every category of society, and are the victims of road accidents, sport, war, nervous breakdowns, trisomy 21, etc. Given the increasing number of people classified as "handicapped" at a time when the effect of economic and demographic changes has been to do away with spontaneous solidarity, it has appeared necessary to create a conscious solidarity which is accompanied by a political objective. As Malraux put it, "Solidarity is the most intelligent form of egoism". Moreover, can societies afford to contain millions of "rejects" who take no part in their economic, social and cultural development? Total integration is a long process which cannot rely on private initiative alone. Therefore, in order to give the "handicapped" the same rights as other citizens, each country introduces special legislation of a more and more complete and complex nature. But because of political factors, and in order that the "handicapped" may not seem to be "privileged" or "a burden on society", this legislation has to have the support of public opinion. Such a consensus can be arrived at only through constant debate on the social and political problems which face every community. Information is necessary for discussion, and discussion is necessary for action. So there has to be a strategy concerning the targets to be aimed at, the means of reaching them, and the evaluation of results.

A parallel can be established between inter-personal relationships and inter-group relationships. In the first case, the most lasting relationships require the collaboration of the two people involved. Similarly, at the level of groups, as

also of countries, long-term co-operation can only be based on mutually advantageous relations. According to this hypothesis, we need to convince public opinion that it needs the "handicapped". Hence the desirability of bringing out the following points:

1. The difficulties encountered by handicapped people also concern other sectors of the population who are not regarded or do not regard themselves as "handicapped". The difficulties of the disabled often reveal difficulties experienced by all. The difference resides in the acuteness of the problems rather than in their nature.
2. The integration of handicapped people into society is a positive contribution to the community and enriches all its members.

There thus emerged from the statements made in the morning and from the afternoon's discussion a number of converging, complementary, interdependent and, in short, cumulative ideas which might serve as a basis for informing the public and hence for creating images.

(i) To be handicapped is just one of all the many possibilities of human existence, and, even if causes and consequences change, a handicap should be considered as a natural phenomenon which is brought out into the open and spoken of in the same way as other human potentialities.

(ii) A handicap, and, even more, the notion of "the handicapped", is relative. The degree of a handicap depends on the equipment the community has at its disposal, the possibilities of using it, and the way other people perceive disablement. When there is a confrontation between a staircase and a paralysed person in a wheelchair, the problem can be presented as the staircase rather than the paralysis. At one time it was considered a handicap to wear glasses or to have red hair. If society were made up entirely of blind people, they would have no problem.

(iii) The able and the disabled have more points in common than differences. To take the case of employment, the choice of a job is not a problem peculiar to the "handicapped", and can help the general public to identify itself with them. We saw, for example, a Swedish programme about a deaf woman who wanted to become a teacher. The programme was broadcast twice, the second time after an interval of four years, and the lapse of time showed that what was not possible in 1972 was possible in 1976. This led public opinion, and the "handicapped" themselves, to challenge certain ideas. Again, if some workers who once suffered from tuberculosis are transferred by the doctor to another part of the factory because they cannot stand the dust and steam, the exclusive insistence on the negative aspect of the handicap may conceal the equally important fact that the dust and steam must also be harmful to the other workers.

As was pointed out by Sweden, although the "right to be different" is involved as an argument for admitting the "handicapped" into the community, there is a danger that this may make the general public feel that the "handicapped" really have many problems and, what is more, specific problems, so that they are in fact not "like other people". This is an example of how one may produce the opposite of the desired effect.

(iv) The integration of handicapped persons improves the quality of life for everyone. To take the example of architectural barriers and the gradual change which has taken place in our approach to them, it has come to be realized, little by little, that not only the "handicapped" but also old people, expectant mothers and mothers with small children are inconvenienced by such difficulties. Carrying this argument a stage further, an American television programme showed how the abolition of architectural obstacles for six handicapped students made life better for all the students

at their university. At the school level, given a certain amount of material help (such as aid to pupils and teachers), the "handicapped" children who are integrated into the school are stimulated physically, intellectually and emotionally, while the other pupils become aware of the diversity of human beings and more alive to social problems. More fundamentally, once the question is raised of how to avoid rejection, we come up against the problem of the desirable rate and level of performance, or in other words the ultimate aims of the particular exercise. Should public transport endeavour to convey as many people as possible in the minimum time? If so, is that compatible with respect for the quality of life? Is school just for the acquisition of knowledge, or should it facilitate development of the personality? Have we not arrived here at a new approach, which might give handicapped people, especially the most afflicted, a social function?

(v) The need to de-dramatize handicap. One cause of the difficulties of communication between the able and the disabled is the mystery surrounding the origins of a particular handicap and the possibilities of compensating for it. This is due to a general tendency to establish a hierarchy of handicaps according to their origin, as for example the distinction between war-disabled, victims of industrial accidents, and the congenitally infirm. But does not this kind of grading derive largely from the idea of guilt? It is therefore important to supply the public with accurate information and so create a non-fatalistic image of handicaps. Similarly, the public often knows little about such possibilities of compensation as Braille for the blind, the use of gesture and lip-reading for the deaf, and prostheses and electronic appliances for those whose motor functions are impaired. By demonstrating such aids we can not only give reassurance but also, and more important still, create objective bases for contact; the problems of what to say and how to communicate become less intractable. The different techniques of compensation afford the media an opportunity to heighten public awareness through channels not confined exclusively to the "handicapped". A most remarkable example was "Hands Up!", a Swedish television series on sign language presented in the form of a game. The viewers were not asked to look at a documentary on the "handicapped", but to be entertained by watching children play and by taking part in the game themselves.

(vi) The "handicapped" are an asset to society and not a liability; we should concentrate on their abilities rather than their disabilities.

They are an asset because of their work (so long as this is not restricted to "protected" occupations); by their experience; by being available to listen to others when most people have less and less time to spare; by their ability to recreate bonds of solidarity; by their creativity and their very existence in a society which tends to make people conform to a given social model.

(vii) The "handicapped" have duties as well as rights. Integration is the most difficult approach, because it calls for individual effort. In order to be accepted as fully-fledged citizens, the "handicapped" must contribute their talents and energies to the cultural and economic progress of society as a whole (see the statements made by the representatives of the United States of America, Poland, Denmark, etc.).

But while it is plain enough that images of the handicapped need to be changed, making use of a new approach based on results already achieved, and stressing the community of interest which exists between all members of a society, there still remains the problem of what methods to use to inform public opinion. While no method should be neglected (Austria and Switzerland showed how songs could be used), the experience of various countries suggests that audio-visual methods are the most effective, provided the programmes are backed up by additional material such as booklets, posters and cassettes, which must be made available to all. Total integration is a long process, and public awareness must be cultivated steadily but

gradually, avoiding over-saturation. This means keeping the subject constantly before the "consumer", as for example in the United Kingdom with the serial "James is our Brother". It means frequent follow-ups to find out what results have been secured and thus what changes ought to be made, and above all to make people see that integration is their business, and not just the concern of others.

Those working in information often assume that the "handicapped" do not "go down" (not to say "sell") very well. Yet relevant experiments have shown that the general public is interested in the problem when it is approached in a way that is simple, natural and undramatic. Extreme cases should be avoided; "the handicapped person should appear strong not weak, paying taxes rather than claiming a pension, cheerful and with a sense of humour, like any other citizen". For instance, rather than expecting people to forget wheelchairs and thus forget handicap, it is probably better to admit that there will always be wheelchairs, but that the important thing is the person who uses them, and who organizes his life, including his handicap, with the same aims in view as an able-bodied person. (This was well shown in a Polish study.) In order to avoid stereotypes, people with the same handicap, but with different characters and personalities, should be shown in different social, professional and family situations. Since the aim is to persuade people that, appearances aside, "a handicapped person is first and foremost a man or a woman, old or young, with the same feelings, thoughts and aspirations as all the others of his or her sex and age", it is important that handicapped people should themselves be involved in information, at the levels of planning, execution and evaluation, especially as a really effective strategy depends on the consensus of all, able-bodied and disabled alike. Several speakers recalled that words are very significant, and that in connection with the "handicapped", terms like "collaborating with" and "looking after" have special connotations. Since what we have to do is to challenge negative mental attitudes which have been building up for centuries, it is probably better to have scattered campaigns rather than massive campaigns concentrated in time, which, by focusing public opinion, at a given moment, on the subject of handicaps and the "handicapped", are liable to widen the already existing gulf, not to speak of the danger of dissipation of interest once such campaigns are over.

All those attending the Round Table stressed the desirability of popularizing information by using existing channels such as radio and television, and the press. In France, for example, a film called "Un neveu silencieux" (The nephew who didn't say much), about a family with a little mongol boy, was a great success, not only because of its intrinsic value but also because it was transmitted as part of a popular series, "Les dossiers de l'écran", a discussion programme. Similarly with the press: rather than have a special column devoted to "the handicapped", it would be better to record the problems and developments concerned as particular examples under the general heading of the subject in question. Sometimes special programmes are needed, as in the case of subtitled news bulletins for the deaf, educational broadcasts, etc., and then it is better not to aim exclusively at the special audience, but to widen the appeal by scheduling the programmes at peak listening or viewing hours, and by presenting some of them as games or as answers to questions from viewers or listeners who want to know how to behave towards the "handicapped" (see the contributions of Sweden, Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom). But for interesting and motivating the public, it is better not to offer them speeches, but rather an opportunity to "identify", and this can be done by showing them human beings confronted with human problems. Significant here is the great success of television films such as "Claudia" in Switzerland and "Like Other People" in the United Kingdom. The first, which was 50 minutes long, showed the relationship between Claudia, a little mongol girl of nine, and her elder brother Dany, who finds out from other people that his sister is handicapped and tries to hide it. The second film, which lasted 37 minutes, dealt with a young handicapped couple who wanted to get married and have a real emotional and sexual life, and showed how their dreams might come true.

At this point a word should be said about the Film Fortnight on "Handicaps and Maladjustments". Forty-four films from ten different countries were shown, to an audience of about 70 at each showing. This initiative aroused considerable interest, as was proved by the length of the discussions, which lasted between one and two hours after each showing and were attended by most of those who had seen the films; also by all the requests for information as to how to obtain the films themselves. It should be noted that quite a few of the participants here were themselves handicapped. The need for an international documentation and distribution centre for such films was generally agreed. It was hoped there could be another such showing which might reach both the general public and film producers, and this brought out the fact that our information strategy, like any other, needs the support of a co-ordinating body in all the countries concerned. The role of such a body would be to supply documentation on specific subjects to all those involved in preparing and distributing information, and to carry out studies on the images of the "handicapped" which are presented either to the general public or to such specialized audiences as schoolchildren, the medical and para-medical professions, etc. By way of illustration we might ponder the impact on the general public of Fellini's films, the most recent of which, "Casanova", made use of several handicapped actors. Is it pure speculation to suggest that they are not there by chance? As a matter of fact, handicapped people have been appearing in films for a very long time, and the part they have played and the position they have occupied would repay study. That is why, at a time when we are stressing the importance of the image in bringing about the acceptance in everyday life of those whose appearance or behaviour does not conform to current models, we must hope that the cinema in general will make use of handicapped people, not because they are handicapped, but simply because infirmity is one feature of the human condition.

The same remarks apply to the press and to literature. In Hugo's famous novel, "Notre-Dame de Paris", there is a description of a "Cour des Miracles" in which infirmity, malingering, begging and debauchery are lumped together in an aura of fear, fascination and pity. And what child has not read Collodi's story of Pinocchio, where a fox and a cat, in order to steal from the hero, pretend to be paralysed and blind? At the end of the book, when their feigned afflictions become real, is this not meant to be a just punishment for their duplicity?

The subject of infirmity has long been used, intentionally or not, and especially in the education of the young, to foster certain kinds of behaviour. This is perhaps one of the possible explanations for the use of "animals that behave like human beings". The anthropomorphism of this kind of fiction enables the child to project his own desires and fears; and does not the cripple play a special part in the development of emotional maturity and equilibrium? Perhaps it is in this area that we should search for the most suitable psychological approach in conveying information to the public. Should we appeal to pity, affectivity, emotion or reason? Are not these different approaches determined by the aim one has in view, or by the level of awareness of the public which one is addressing? Faced with outright refusal, should we not appeal to kindness before appealing to reason? In fact, in order to attain our final objective, i.e. the total integration into society of those who are "not like other people", it would seem desirable that the life of the "handicapped" person and his reactions to his own and other disabilities should be depicted as subtly and unsensationally as possible. We should avoid the psychological stereotypes often linked to the "handicapped" (aggressiveness, melancholy, gratitude, etc.), as also the stereotypes attached to the able-bodied (kindness, shame, etc.). In the final resort, if there is a "last enemy" to conquer, and one to whom anyone might fall victim, it is the monolithic image. For such an image slows up integration because it conveys an incomplete picture of the experience of a handicap and of its social dimension. The old idea of the cripple, like that of the orphan, always has been and will continue to be used to encourage conduct which conforms to some ideology (resignation, acceptance, effort, making good, etc.).

But since it is our object to convince people that the "handicapped" are assets to society, should we not try, as we examine their role, to define new values which may lend new significance to the life of all members of the community? The sociologist, Bernard Galimberti, in a book entitled "Jeunes travailleurs d'aujourd'hui" (Young Workers of Today), has pointed out the younger generation's profound desire for genuine, authentic, open and cordial relationships. They value work relationships higher than the work itself. Is not this a sign of cultural change? In our civilization, the traditional social model is based on the values of work and success. Perhaps a new model is taking shape which will lead people to shun isolation and feel comfortable and at ease with others, to be able to enter easily into direct and open relationships, and perhaps be able as easily to give them up. In such a context the "handicapped", refusing to accept emotional coldness, social distance between individuals, and the grading of human relationships, might play a leading part in the change to be effected. It is possible that through a short-cut in history, whereas the "handicapped" have always been presented as having need of society, we have now reached a point where society has need of the "handicapped".

Images of the "handicapped" have been used to bring about the social integration of others. Now perhaps the time is ripe for images of the "handicapped" to be used for their own integration.

Images, whatever their subject, are never neutral, and it is one of the achievements of the Round Table to have reminded us of the fact. People can no longer say "We didn't know".

If, as we believe, the richness of human societies resides in the diversity of their members, integration, which benefits everyone, depends on restoring to the "handicapped" their full human value. A handicapped person is "all that a man can be".